

March 8, 2011

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members:

My name is Dan Haffey and I would like to ask for your time to consider SB-151 which will add a surcharge to court fines imposed in Montana to help provide funds for much needed prevention efforts in our state.

My reasons for asking for your positive consideration of this bill are many and my twenty five plus years as an educator, Licensed Addictions Counselor, DUI and MIP Instructor give me a unique insight into the problems caused in Montana as a result of crimes committed in Montana especially those where the use of alcohol and drugs play a role.

Two years ago I was asked to become part of the Montana Crime Prevention Council. I took this responsibility very seriously because I have seen firsthand the results of crime and how it has evolved during the past 25 years.

My first position as a Chemical Dependency Counselor positioned me at Montana State Prison where I gained positive insight into the dynamics of criminal thinking and its cost to society. I was also made aware of the fact that many of those inmates had little or no prevention education during their lives which very well may have kept them from entering a system that costs Montana taxpayers over 30,000 a year to keep them incarcerated in.

Last Tuesday, I volunteered to facilitate an alcohol server training for seventy people in Anaconda which included twelve people from Missoula who were there because they and their employers realize that we are living in a world that has drastically changed in the past 30 years and individual and business liability can no longer be ignored. The evaluations from my class members unanimously agree that this is very important and should be part of a process in which those who continue to ignore the safety of customers must be addressed.

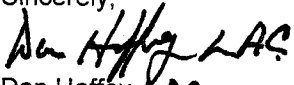
We now understand that positive prevention programs do work and the Board of Crime Control is working to take a leadership role in bringing all prevention entities together in our state to work together for a common goal. Crime prevention truly is everyone's business and we need positive collaboration to make it happen.

I honestly believe that we can prevent individuals from entering the corrections system and provide positive outcomes regarding programs like Neighborhood Watch and School Bullying programs which were not even on the radar thirty years ago but are paramount to our efforts in keeping communities and children safe today.

Prevention efforts in Montana over the years have been seriously under funded. Twenty percent of alcohol produced in this country is consumed by underage drinkers. Alcohol companies spend four billion dollars a year promoting their products to our young people and the cost to Montanans from alcohol related crime and damage is staggering. The Board of Crime Control will promote programs to reduce these problems across the board with a small fee paid by those who actually commit the illegal acts.

I can be reached at 406-498-1485 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Dan Haffey LAC.